

ALCOHOL AND YOUR HEALTH:

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Knowing how alcohol affects you and understanding the differences between lower-risk, risky, and harmful drinking is important for your health. Only you can decide the role that alcohol plays in your life.

WHAT IS A STANDARD DRINK?

12 fl. oz. of regular beer



≈ 5% alcohol

8–9 fl. oz. of malt liquor
(shown in a 12 oz. glass)



≈ 7% alcohol

5 fl. oz. of table wine



≈ 12% alcohol

1.5 fl. oz. shot of distilled spirits

(gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey, etc.)



≈ 40% alcohol

The percent of pure alcohol in beverages varies widely. Read beverage labels to find out how much alcohol is in your drink.

*Adapted from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

DRINKING RISK ZONES*

• **High-risk drinking** should be further assessed by a health care professional.

• **Harmful drinking** is experiencing negative health effects or social consequences from alcohol use.

• **Risky drinking** is exceeding recommended limits for drinking, which can lead to health or social problems.

• **Lower risk drinking** is either not using substances or staying within recommended guidelines. **For alcohol use, this typically means drinking no more than three standard drinks per day and no more than seven standard drinks per week.***

*Some guidelines recommend different amounts for men and women or for different ages. These lower-risk drinking guidelines are intended for most adults.


Groups that should not drink generally include people who are pregnant, people younger than 21, people with health conditions that may worsen with alcohol use, and people taking medications that interact with alcohol.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF RISKY OR HARMFUL ALCOHOL USE

Adapted from World Health Organization (WHO) Audit Manual and Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Oregon Reference Sheet.



- Depression/anxiety
- Irritability/anger/aggression
- Alcohol dependence
- Memory loss
- Sleep disturbance
- Balance/coordination difficulties



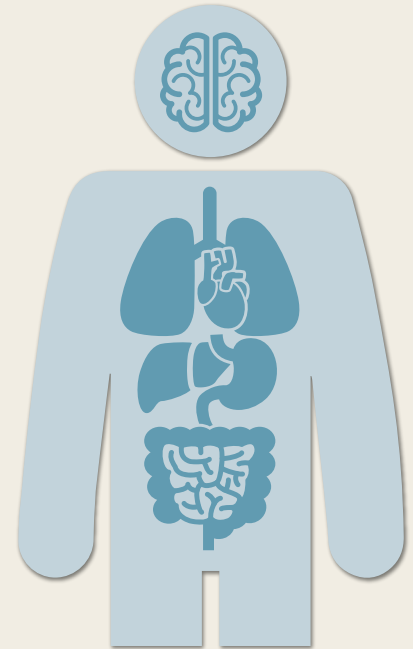
- Type 2 diabetes
- Stomach/digestive problems
- Circulatory/nerve problems
- Sexual dysfunction



- Increased cancer risk
- Stroke/hypertension/heart failure
- Reduced resistance to infections



- Motor vehicle crashes
- Social/legal consequences
- Bodily injury/accidents



TIPS AND RESOURCES

How to reduce your risk

Get support:

- Talk to a medical or behavioral health professional.
- Seek help for anxiety/depression that may influence your use.
- Reach out to friends and family.
- Participate in a recovery or other support group.

Change your habits:

- Plan fun activities without alcohol.
- Limit exposure to people, places, and activities that trigger the urge to drink.
- Spend time with loved ones who aren't drinking.

If you choose to drink:

- Count your drinks.
- Eat before drinking, and drink water between alcoholic drinks.
- Plan to get a ride with a designated driver.
- Don't mix alcohol with other substances or medications.

How to talk to a loved one about alcohol use

- Talk while both of you are sober.
- Express concern without judgment.
- Be an active listener.
- Offer to help connect them to resources.
- Celebrate steps forward and changes.

MAKE A PLAN TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

What **changes** do you want to make regarding your alcohol use?

What can you do to **limit** your use?

What **challenges** might you face when you make these changes?

How will you **cope** with these challenges?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

For confidential, 24/7 support and referrals, call the toll-free **OASAS HOPEline: 1-877-846-7369** or text **HOPENY (467369)**

For more information, visit: **oasas.ny.gov**



Office of Addiction Services and Supports

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